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make this what it is. Wrought out in a new plastic material, it has gained an elasticity, a suppleness, a richness of outline and of modelled surface, of which only the half concealed elements lurk in the green plant. The way in which the leaves lap over and lie next each other is admirable, as is also their highest attainment in the corner volutes; these, as (apparently) the principal expression of strength, are rightly less naturalistic than the others, but they have an acanthus leaf springing with them out of the same shoot, as their support and explanation. How clearly and significantly does each part of this elastic whole separate itself from the rest, while rich under-cuttings, plainly showing the calyx to be the kernel of the capital, produce that background of deep shadows which is necessary to impart the fulness of life to the leaf-work."

From the second part of the first volume, which treats of Antique Sculpture, we have space only to quote a few words addressed to those who are not aware that whoever would acquire a knowledge and appreciation of this art—which of all others is least easy of approach—must, as Goethe said of the student of art history, "an vielen Pforten klopfen, ehe ihm aufgethan wurde."

"The mind," says Burckhardt, "opens itself to sculpture gradually and with difficulty. The laws and limitations under which it produces the beautiful are so many-sided, and for the most part so hidden, that even to enter the vestibule of this art requires much time, practice, and intercourse with sculptors. Many antique works speak with sufficient force and clearness to produce an effect upon the general run of spectators; but unless eye and mind have been subjected to a certain training, and taught fixed principles upon which to operate, a great number of the most admirable examples of ancient sculpture will be passed over without notice."

After saying that the Greeks did not demand what we call originality, i. e. a constant change of subject and mode of representation, from their artists, but, when once the highest expression for any object had been found, accepted it as final for centuries, the author proceeds to define types of deities, and mentions the artists who fixed them, as, for instance, Pheidias did that of Zeus, Praxiteles that of Aphrodite, and Lysippos that of Herakles. He then takes up the great gods of Olympus, as represented in sculpture, and their respective followings, as of athletes and gladiators after Hermes, amazons and muses after Apollo. Finally, he speaks of the statues of Gauls and other barbarians, of the portrait images of Greeks and Romans, of sarcophagi, etc., making constant reference to statues analogous in subject to those which he has under discussion when, as in the case of the Stroganoff statuette and the Apollo Belvidere, light can be thus gained as to subject and action.

We have no space to analyze the part of the *Cicerone* devoted to mediæval and Renaissance art, but must content ourselves with saying that they are no less exhaustive than the first part of the work. A mere glance at the Index gives us a fresh impression of the vast artistic heritage of Italy, and makes us realize more than ever how she is still richer than all other European countries, despite the ravages of time and man. Not a city and scarcely a town to be found on the map of Italy is absent from the list, in which each appears with its references to buildings, statues, or pictures, in all cases historically, if not artistically, interesting.

That many generations of travellers may use the *Cicerone* as their guide through the land which once seen can never be forgotten, is a wish which, if granted, will add enlightenment to their enjoyment.

CHARLES C. PERKINS.

ANCIENT SCULPTURES IN GUATEMALA.

THE SCULPTURES OF SANTA LUCIA COSUMALWHUAPA IN GUATEMALA. *With an Account of Travels in Central America and on the Western Coast of South America.* By S. HABEL, M. D. Washington City: Published by the Smithsonian Institution. (April, 1879.) Folio. Ill. with 8 heliot. plates. (Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge. 269.)



THE Smithsonian Institution has lately published an illustrated quarto of great interest on the sculptures of Santa Lucia Cosumalguapa, in Guatemala, which brings to light a new phase of aboriginal artistic taste in that country, of which Mr. Bancroft writes: "And yet this mysterious land, promising so much, has yielded to actual exploration only comparatively trifling results in the form of material relics of antiquity." As if to utter an additional caution, these remains were found on the southern slope of the Sierras, where few sculptures have hitherto come to light.

The author of this work, the late Dr. Habel, of New York, relinquished his medical practice and spent seven years, at his own expense, in exploring the antiquities of Central and South America, during which time he made a careful examination of Guatemala. His search was rewarded by the discovery of a group of monoliths near Santa Lucia, in the department of Esquintla, and not far from the base of the Volcano del Fuego.

A short time before his arrival, a workman in digging came upon a pile of stone slabs, which proved to be carved upon the surface. By carefully removing the accumulated earth and vegetable matter, Dr. Habel found them to be a group or series of bas-reliefs, which seem to have been the wainscoting of a temple or palace, and which resemble in many respects the Assyrian slabs discovered by Layard. It is impossible to tell the number of these sculptured slabs, as the most of them are in an extended heap, and the author could examine only those upon the surface, through lack of the means of excavating. The greater number of those examined are twelve feet long, three feet wide, and two feet thick. Three feet of one end served as a base to be set in the earth, like a post. On one side, the remaining nine feet are sculptured in low-relief, or in *cavovrilievo*, being surrounded by a raised border, the height of which indicates the elevation of the relief.

The status in civilization of those who wrought these monuments may be partly inferred from the details of their ornamentation. Upon the head-dresses and clothing of the deities and of the officiating priests, and on the severed heads of the human sacrifices, are representations of the products of wood-carving, stone and gem cutting, spinning and weaving, shell-work, and, possibly, metallurgy. As to the use of metals, however, Mr. Bancroft says: "There can be little doubt that the Maya sculpture was executed with tools of stone." Nearly all of the objects shown in these designs, as the author well remarks, are for ornamentation only, and not for use. They are an expression

of the barbaric sense of the beautiful, and not an indication of utility. The diversity and elaborateness of form and grouping also bear witness to the advancement of the

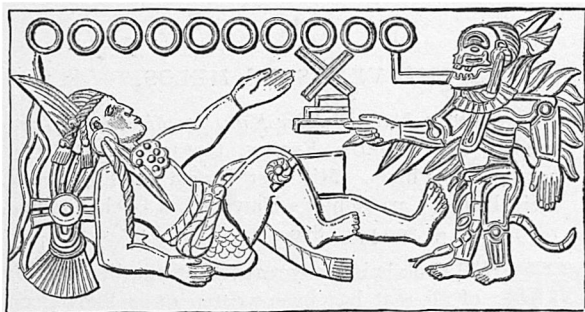


Fig. 13.¹

sculptors of Santa Lucia. In general appearance, there is a greater resemblance to Assyrian than to Egyptian style in the execution of the human form, but the American falls far behind both in the choice of subjects, and in the grade of mythological conceptions.

Dr. Habel—who, by the way, was not versed in the literature of his subject—seems to think that the ancient Santa Lucians were a people distinct from the Mexicans; but an inspection of the details will reveal an extensive Aztec influence throughout. In several of the slabs are to be seen written characters, or hieroglyphics of some kind, and also symbols which appear to perform the function of numerals. (See Figs. 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.) In Fig. 13 a sick man is lying on his back, arrayed in his plumed head-dress and shell gorget, and adorned with a garter rosette. Before him stands the image of Death,

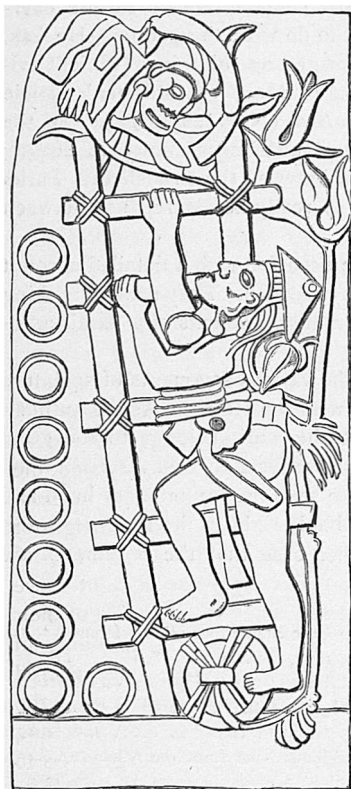


Fig. 15.

¹ The figures here given are reduced outlines from the heliotype plates in Dr. Habel's work.

say, "In a few days or years you will recover." The same numeral device is beautifully exhibited in Fig. 15, where we see a man leaving the world upon a rude ladder to meet the image of Death embowered in buds and blossoms at the top. The heavenly vine has its roots in the world below, which the man is leaving; not a bad expression of the fact that the happiness of the next world springs out of our life here. This same numeral sign is quite common in Aztec paintings and sculptures.

The similarity to Mexican art is also shown by the elaborateness of the head-dresses, which affect a great variety of forms, but are generally braided with ribbons adorned with rings, etc., and reach in cues below the shoulders. Others, yet more complicated, extend to the ankles, ending in some animal form, as an eagle, a tiger, or a fish, or in an object resembling a sheathed cimeter.

The ornamentation of the ear, neck, waist, legs, and feet is almost identical with some Mexican and some Maya sculptures; but in all these, either Dr. Habel has given us more accurate or more fanciful sketches, or the people of Santa Lucia excelled their contemporaries in their skill, as well as in the pose and grouping of their figures. As an illustration of this, observe Fig. 9, where we have a dignified old man, sitting upon a chair or boat, adorned with a head-dress that is not excessive for Mexican art, gartered, and holding in his hand a paddle. It may be that we have here the Santa Lucian Noah, on his perilous voyage to save the human race from destruction by the deluge.

But the most attractive feature in these relics of barbarous art is the symbol of speech, or utterance. From the mouth of each of the human beings, living or dead, emanates a narrow band, curved in different directions, to the sides of which are attached nodes of varying size and shape, and distributed at intervals along the edges. (See Figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 19.) In Fig. 1, the speech is uttered by the obsidian knife as it severs the heads of the victims. In the adoration of the human subjects this staff or band and its knots are of simple form; but in the speech of the figure which appears to personate Death the staff is angular and zigzag. (See Figs. 3 and 13.) Those emanating from the deities, however, are excessively complicated and adorned; proceeding from the head and neck, never from the mouth, they wind about in graceful, vine-like curves, wherever the artist could find room for them, and are ornamented with symbols characteristic of the deity which they represent. In Fig. 2 we may have the god of fertility, whose aged face and ornaments of fruits and flowers indicate his paternal feeling. The flaming bands of Fig. 3 betoken the sun-god, whose fierce tropical radiance is intensified by the two snarling wolves' heads beneath. In Fig. 4, on the other hand, beams forth the benign radiance of the moon, surrounded by the emblems of her worship and honored by the mystic symbol of the cross. Other deities have their appropriate bands, whose voices, lost to us indeed, once spoke in words of comfort or of terror to the people of Santa Lucia.

Besides the speech-bands, there are flame-like lines arising from the girdles of three of the suppliants (Figs. 5, 6, and 8), as if to add unction and emphasis to the utterance proceeding from the mouth.

This speech symbol in a much ruder form is found in old Mexican paintings and sculptures. A plate in Kingsborough, from the Mendoza Codex, describing the educa-

tion of Aztec children, and reproduced in Bancroft's *Native Races*, Vol. II. p. 539, exhibits the speech symbol issuing from the mouth of the parent. In a curious old manuscript left in Mexico by a Catholic missionary of the sixteenth century, there is a set of drawings designed to lead the natives to a comprehension of the Lord's prayer. Most of the pictures are either European or commonplace, but in two or three instances speech or supplication is denoted by a crozier-shaped line issuing from the mouth of a human figure. This is called by Sr. Orozco y Berra

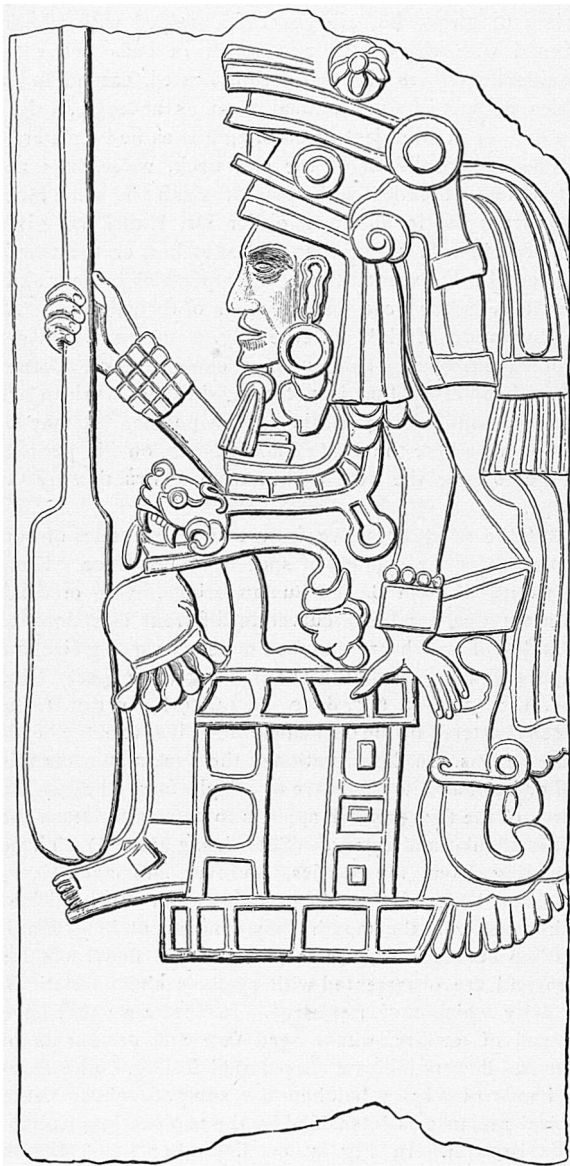


Fig. 9.

the Aztec symbol of speech. If this be true, we have unmistakable evidence of Aztec influence upon the debatable ground of Central America. The frequently recurring rattlesnake leads to the same conclusion. The genuineness of Dr. Habel's drawings of these wonderful reliefs has been attested by Dr. Bastian of the Museum of Berlin, who, subsequently to our author's visit, went to Santa Lucia and purchased the slabs for the German government; thus adding pungency to the oft-repeated sneer that the best place to study American antiquities is not America.

The discovery of this magnificent group of art relics

upon ground supposed to have been exhausted years ago must certainly awaken a fresh enthusiasm respecting Central American antiquities.

OTIS T. MASON.

THE VENUS OF MELOS.

DIE VENUS VON MILO. *Eine Kunstgeschichtliche Monographie von* FRIEDR. FRHRN. GOELER V. RAVENSBURG, Dr. Philos. Mit vier Tafeln in Lichtdruck. Heidelberg: Carl Winter's Universitäts-Buchhandlung. 1879. viii + 200 pp. 8vo.

THIS book is in many respects an excellent *résumé* of all that has been written or is known concerning the Venus of Melos. It has evidently been compiled with much care, and with genuine enthusiasm for the subject. Nevertheless, persons already familiar with the questions discussed will find in it little that is new, and although the treatment is claimed to be scientific, few of the conclusions arrived at will carry conviction. The author has drawn too much from modern works, and too little from the direct study of ancient art, with which, indeed, his acquaintance does not seem to be very accurate.

The work is divided into ten chapters. In Chap. I., which treats of the discovery of the statue, we look in vain for a fair or accurate description of the "grotto" in which it stood; and yet there are few more essential problems connected with the work than whether that grotto was or was not the *exedra* referred to in the inscription found above its entrance. This inscription the author, in the face of very strong evidence (see Aicard, *La Vénus de Milo*, pp. 178, 179), almost contemptuously throws overboard as having nothing to do with the grotto. He has, indeed, a special faculty for getting rid of inconvenient evidence. He knows nothing of Mr. W. J. Stillman's article on the grotto in the *Nation* (Nov. 28, 1872).¹ In the same chapter there is much unfairness shown in dealing with the story of the fight between the French and Turks over the statue. There is really no discrepancy between the different accounts.

Chaps. II. and III. are occupied with a detailed account of the statue in its present condition. They contain nothing new, and are not free from misstatements and unfair arguments.

Chap. IV. deals with the various fragments of sculpture that came to Paris along with the statue. As the author's purpose is to show that the work belongs to the great period of art, he uses all his efforts to cast discredit upon the two inscriptions, and to save the fragmentary hand and arm. Although he is probably right in the latter instance, one does not feel in either case that the arguments are conclusive.

¹ Besides this article, the *Nation* contains four other references to the Venus, — April 2, 1874, Aug. 9, 1877, Dec. 11 and 18, 1879. The first and third of these are by Mr. Stillman, the latter being a very severe but very just criticism of an absurd article that appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* (October, 1879). Mr. Stillman considers the Venus to be a Victory, — indeed, the original Athena Nike from the Athenian Akropolis; but this view, though held in a modified form by such men as Prof. Reber and O. Keller, must be regarded as at best unfounded. Can any one point to a half-draped Victory produced before the Macedonian time? Mr. Stillman promises to prove his position, and one can only wish he might.